

Around the City

She was a lumpy woman with a mess of bleached hair that showed gray-brown at the roots. Her baby blue evening wrap was twenty years too young for her, and in her puffy ears blazed big diamonds that looked too good to be true.

Her companion was less assertive in black silk with her theater scarf low enough to show a yoke of black medallions on net that from the rear of the car had the effect of lace roaches crawling up her back. She also flashed solitaires, and the black velvet band that fairly choked in its effort to recall a long-lost chin line was fastened with a sunburst that doubtless once had its day in print as "the gift of the groom."

As the car whizzed eastward in what would have been midnight blackness, ex-



A Silk Sports Costume for Warm Days.

cept for electric lights along the way, the blue wrap and black lace roaches giggled and gabbled, and, oh, the foolish things, smirked at a prosperous looking man across the aisle, who paid no attention whatever.

And at every turn of lumpy ears and hunched neck the solitaire and clusters blazed out like searchlights and the sunburst was an aurora borealis of every color under the sun.

Back of the two, across the car, hunched another man, shabby and unshaven, with a pallid gauntness of cheekbones, that probably—no, surely—came from want of meat and vegetables in plenty, and with a furtive intentness in his eyes that would undervalue his attractions as a companion on a lonely road—poor fellow! And he watched the women, and, of course, must have taken in their pyrotechnic show.

When the car had spun around the green-black quiet of the Capitol grounds, the prosperous man couldn't button that put him out at the House building.

On the other side of the library two dear, reliable and most eminently proper spinsters; one with a bead opera bag and the other with a theater program, got off—without having been noticed by anybody, as is the fate of spinsters.

The car spun on toward the sparsely settled section of the far southeast. And the only passengers aboard were the women of the diamonds—and the man behind.

As the robbery failed to show up in the morning papers the man couldn't have been as down-and-out as he looked. Maybe he was a judge of diamonds. Maybe, again, life was so dull for him that the two old girls took on the value of a free show. And, naturally, it might be that he was an honest man. As one spinster said to the other in her relief at not having to go on the witness stand and tell her age:

"Only fate knows the real way that man did not swipe those diamonds—and fate is dumb."

Unconventional people are always interesting, if only for their splendid unconcern for the opinions of the rank and file.

One woman, as a case in point, walked along 14th street, turned a corner

and went down H street, the other

afternoon.

Just to look at her, she was as like as peas to any other nice woman in a black skirt, white waist and nondescript straw. Her coat was over one arm and the other hugged about six

magazines.

The thing that set her apart, and perhaps above her conventional sister was the packing box she had in tow. It was a tall, narrow pine box labeled "glass," and she dragged it after her as nonchalantly as though it were a poodle at the end of a string. The box made a rasping noise, but the woman didn't mind. She just kept dragging it along.

Any ordinary woman would have paid Uncle Somebody a quarter to pushcart that box and the six magazines. Ability to tote and haul would have had nothing to do with it. The out absolute fact to be considered was "how it would look."

And it might, after all, be a box of glass. Well, she wasn't that sort of woman, at all. She knew she could get that box to wherever she wanted to get it, and that her arms were equal to the magazines. It suited her to do it. And that was all there was to it. She didn't belong to the spinsterish rank and file.

A woman—cord-bag glass—halted before a window display of what the trade calls gents' furnishings. The

mag woman snarled back.

woman with her was loitering ahead.

"Come here, Mag, and look at this—"

"Panama hats from \$5 to \$25—what do you think of that?"

The Mag woman snarled back and looked at the sign with the certainty of one who knew what was coming.

"Ain't that the limit?" And Jim worried the life out of her because I paid \$3.49 for this hat that'll last me two years, made over. Guess he thought I wouldn't be caught on to the price of pannymars. Aint it like a man, all over?"

"You don't tell me Jim's gone and

bought a pannymar? Well, what's going to happen next?"

"Who? Him? My husband? Not much, he hasn't. Where do you suppose Jim's going to get the money for pannymar hats, with all the children we got an' me with a doctor half the time for lung trouble? I'd like to see him try it once! Oh, that's a man, every time! Fuss like all get out, over the money a woman spends on a hat, and then turns around and spends \$25 for a pannymar—untrimmed. Don't tell me about 'em. I know 'em from A to Z."

And a mere spinster woman, who had been observing pannymars with a nephew in mind, wondered how long a lady with lung trouble could keep up a solo like that and how long Mag would stand for it.

At the movies:

"Madam, will you kindly take off your hat?"

"It can't possibly be in the way—"

"But I can't see through the veil."

"Well, if you had my headache you wouldn't want to see."

The woman behind had obviously lacked the training of a ladies' military camp, for she collapsed rather than fight the situation.

And the widow woman who had a headache and for that reason presumably didn't want to see, kept her veiled bonnet on from start to finish.

But there is always a compensation of some sort. When she had seen the show she got up and went out.

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